

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5 and 7-31 are pending in this application. Claims 16-20 were withdrawn by the Examiner as a result of an Election of Species Request, but should be rejoined and allowed when claim 1 is allowed. See MPEP 821.04. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5, 7, 9, 12, 15 and 31 are amended and claims 4 and 6 are canceled. Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 4 and 6. Claims 5, 7, 9, 12, and 15 are amended to depend from claim 1. Claim 31 is amended to correct a minor informality. No new matter is added.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action indicates that claims 8-11 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants appreciate this indication of allowability and submit that all pending claims are allowable for the reasons discussed below.

II. 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph Rejection of Claim 31

The Office Action rejects claim 31 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claim 31 is amended to overcome this rejection. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

III. The Claims are Patentable

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4, 15 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Schroeder et al. (Schroeder), U.S. Patent No. 5,327,856; and also rejects claims 1-4, 15 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Blish et al. (Blish), U.S. Patent No. 5,331,931. The rejections of canceled claim 4 are moot. The rejections of claims 1-3, 15 and 24-26 are respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claims 4 and 6. Thus, amended claim 1 recites, in part, that the valve-driving apparatus further comprises a torque

fluctuation suppressing mechanism which suppresses fluctuation in torque which is applied to the cam from the valve side. The Office Action acknowledges that Schroeder fails to disclose this mechanism, but asserts that such is taught by Suzuki et al. (Suzuki), U.S. Patent No. 6,739,299 (see rejection of claims 6 and 7 on page 8 of the Office Action).

Suzuki teaches utilizing an electronic vehicle operation control unit to reduce cranking-caused vibration (Fig. 3; Abstract, col. 1, lines 13-15). Suzuki teaches a vibration reducing mechanism incorporated into the electronic vehicle operation control unit for controlling the drive torque from the motor generator that acts on the crankshaft. Suzuki does not teach a torque fluctuation mechanism that is applied to the cam and provided to the valve-driving apparatus. Thus, Suzuki does not disclose a valve-driving apparatus that further comprises a torque fluctuation suppressing mechanism which suppresses fluctuation in torque which is applied to the cam from the valve side, as recited in amended claim 1. Therefore, it would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art to use the teachings of Suzuki in combination with the disclosure of Schroeder to obtain the combination of features recited in claim 1. Blish also fails to disclose or suggest the combination of features recited in amended claim 1.

Because claims 2-4, 15 and 24-26 incorporate the features of claim 1, these claims are also patentable over Schroeder, Suzuki and Blish. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Schroeder in view of Akeda et al. (Akeda), JP 08021326; rejects claims 21-23 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Schroeder in view of Fulks et al. (Fulks), U.S. Patent No. 6,324,845; rejects claims 27-30 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Schroeder in view of Ota et al. (Ota), JP 2002276364; rejects claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Schroeder in view of Shimizu et al. (Shimizu), U.S. Patent No. 6,425,357; rejects claim 13 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Schroeder in view of

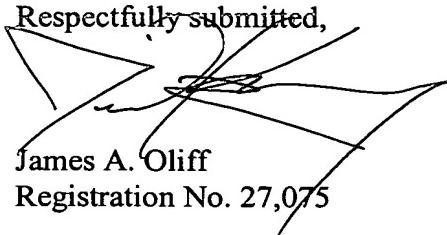
Akeda and further in view of Anderson et al. (Anderson), U.S. Patent No. 6,473,964; rejects claims 6 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Schroeder in view of Suzuki et al. (Suzuki), U.S. Patent No. 6,739,299; and rejects claim 14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Schroeder in view of Akeda and Anderson and further in view of Hirakawa et al. (Hirakawa), WO 8500864. The rejection of canceled claim 6 is moot. The remaining rejections are respectfully traversed.

None of the above references accounts for the deficiencies of Schroeder, Blish or Suzuki with respect to claim 1. Thus, because claims 5, 7, 12-14, 21-23 and 27-30 incorporate the features of claim 1, these claims are patentable over the above references. It is respectfully requested that the rejections be withdrawn.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of all pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

David R. Kemeny
Registration No. 57,241

JAO:DRK/smo

Attachment:
Petition for Extension of Time

Date: August 10, 2006

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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